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WA Fisheries Minister, Norman Moore, minister.moore@dpc.wa.gov.au
WA Minister for Environment, William Marmion, minister.marmion@dpc.wa.gov.au
Perth City Mayor, Lisa Scaffidi, lord.mayor@cityofperth.wa.gov.au
Cottesloe City Mayor Kevin Morgan, mayor@cottesloe.wa.gov.au

Dear Premier Barnett, Minister Norman Moore, Minister Marmion, Mayor Scaffidi and Mayor Morgan,

Recent reports in the WA media have suggested that certain politicians and members of the public are calling for a shark cull in response to the recent shark attack fatalities. We, professionals working with sharks and rays on a daily basis, are sending this letter because we are appalled by such an idea. We are asking you to review the facts and the reality of shark attacks to make the right decision and realize that a shark cull would be disastrous not only to Australia's marine environment but also Australia's reputation as a world leader in marine conservation.

Although the Australian media continue to sensationalize the threat of unprovoked shark attacks to swimmers, the statistics do not support these claims. The Australian Shark Attack File (1) shows only 52 such human fatalities in the last 50 years in Australian waters (1.06 per year), ranging from zero to three in a year. We do not deny that these are personal tragedies, but it is a negligible rate in terms of the vast and increasing number of swimmers from Australian beaches. In addition, natural random variation in the yearly rate should not be confused with a general increase. To put these numbers into context, in one year (July 2000- June 2001) alone, 77 people drowned in the surf of Australian beaches (2).

The sharks involved in human attacks are apex predators. As such, they play a critical role in the complex balances of oceanic ecosystems and their removal can change whole ecosystems (3). We would also like to make you aware that white pointers, (*Carcharodon carcharias*), apparently implicated now, are protected in Australia, both under the EPBC Act, and also in state legislation.

Education and common sense are the best prevention of human fatalities in shark attacks. The conditions that provoke attacks are well known¹, and so avoidance is the only sensible public policy. We encourage the use of non lethal shark protection measures such as spotter planes and patrol boats but please let common sense prevail and do not allow WA's sharks to be culled. Australia has one of the richest most diverse coastlines in the world. Please help to keep it that way and protect our sharks.

Yours Sincerely,

1. Dr. Barbara Wueringer, Perth/Cairns, University of Western Australia
2. Amy Newman (BSc (Hons))(Current PhD) Perth, University of Western Australia
3. Dr. Adrian Gleiss, Perth, Murdoch University

4. Ryan Kempster, PhD student, Shark biologist and founder of Support Our Sharks, Perth, University of Western Australia
5. Miss Amy Blessington (MRes Candidate), Bradford, University of Leeds, UK
6. Nicole Phillips, PhD student, Perth, Murdoch University
7. Sara McCutcheon, Master's student, Florida Atlantic University
8. Dr. Laura J Macesic, HHMI Postdoctoral fellow, Mount Holyoke College
9. Dr. Samuel H. Gruber, Bimini Biological Field Station, Miami
10. Florencia Cerutti, PhD student, Charles Darwin University/AIMS.
11. Melanie Hutchinson, PhD student, Shark research team, Hawaii Institute of Marine Biology, University of Hawaii
12. Miss Holly Frazer, BScMarBiol(Hons), Adelaide, Flinders University/SARDI - Aquatic Sciences
13. Dr. Agnès Le Port, The University of Auckland, Auckland, New Zealand
14. Marit Winther Øyslebø , Cairns, James Cook University
15. David Lee Janson, Cairns, Probe Wetsuits
16. Daniel Claxton, Cairns, Camplin Dive Services
17. Prof Stephen E. Williams, James Cook University, Townsville Australia.
18. Samantha Barnett, Cairns, James Cook University
19. Stephen M Zozaya, Townsville, Centre for Tropical Biodiversity and Climate Change, James Cook University.
20. Jessica Smith, Cairns, James Cook University
21. Natasha Hardy (Honours in Marine Science), Sydney, University of Sydney
22. Caitlin Weatherstone, Cairns, School of Marine and Tropical Biology, James Cook University
23. Cecelia Slade, Townsville, James Cook University
24. Sayaka Uematsu, Townsville, James Cook University/ NRDA Asia
25. Roxanne Abba, Cairns, James Cook University
26. Kane Trezise, Cairns, Ocean Spirit Dive

27. Dr Stephen M Kajiura, Associate Professor, Biological Sciences, Florida Atlantic University, USA
28. Dr. Christine Dudgeon, University of Queensland, Brisbane, Australia
29. Ian Gordon, Off The Edge Marine Systems , Shark Specialist, TV presenter, Sydney, Australia
30. Rafael Santiago Vieira, Fishing Engineer and MSc student, Recife, Federal Rural University of Pernambuco, Brazil
31. John West, Curator, Australian Shark attack File, Taronga Conservation Society Australia.
32. Alex "Sharkman" Buttigieg, Sharkman's World Organization, Malta
33. Dr. Gilles Cuny, The Natural History Museum of Denmark, Copenhagen K, Denmark
34. Dr. Simon J. Pierce, Lead Scientist Marine Megafauna Association, Mozambique, Science Coordinator ECOCEAN Global Whale Shark Database
35. Wolfgang Leander, Shark Photographer, Cochabamba / Bolivia
36. Dr. Neil Hammerschlag, Research Assistant Professor, University of Miami, FL
37. Jenna Sullivan, Ocean Advocate and Marine Educator, Sanibel Sea School, FL
38. Dr. Mikki McComb-Kobza, Postdoctoral Researcher, Ocean Exploration and Deep-Sea Research, Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institute at Florida Atlantic University
39. Dr. Nathan Hart, Research Associate Professor, University of Western Australia, Perth
40. Sabrina Garcia, MSc Candidate, Fisheries Science and Management Research Group, Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, BC, Canada
41. Dr Cynthia Awruch. University of Tasmania, Tasmania, Australia
42. Dr David Powter, School of Environmental and Life Sciences, University of Newcastle
43. Emeritus Prof. Greg Calliet, Moss Landing Marine Laboratories, California
44. James Nash, shark research team, Hawaii Institute of Marine Biology, University of Hawaii
45. Roy Obal, Sumoto, Japan

46. Helene Landry, Canmore, Alberta, Canada
47. Alexis Radovich, Foster City CA USA
48. Katharine Leiter, Brisbane, QLD
49. George H. Burgess, Director, Florida Program for Shark Research, Curator, International Shark Attack File
50. Ryan Smith, St. Louis, MO, United States
51. Frederik Mollen, Elasmobranch Research, Berlaar, Belgium
52. Jeff Whitty, Master's student, Murdoch University, Perth, WA
53. Josh Oakes, Vancouver, BC, Canada
54. Kelly Werner, Stockholm, Sweden
55. Bruce Williams, Durango, CO USA
56. Nick Stanley, Auckland, New Zealand
57. Veronica Gomes, Scuba Instructor, Chandler, AZ USA
58. Rachel Barton, Northampton, England
59. John Hassall, Northampton, England
60. Glenn Ashton, Secretary, Noordhoek Environmental Action Group, Cape Town, South Africa
61. Dr. Laura K. Jordan, University of California Los Angeles, Los Angeles, California, USA
62. Paula Branshaw Carlson, Director of Husbandry, The Dallas World Aquarium
63. Jonathan Davis, MSc Marine Biology, University of Auckland, University of Texas, NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service
64. Kathryn Crow, Burlington ON Canada
65. Anne-marie Harwood, Postgrad student, University of Exeter, UK
66. Julia Spät MSc, (PhD student), King Abdullah University of Science and Technology, Thuwal, Saudi Arabia
67. Aurelie Duhec, Conservation Officer on Alphonse Group, Seychelles. Island Conservation Society

68. Alice Hardman, Warwick, UK
69. Austin J. Gallagher, PhD Student, Research Assistant, University of Miami
70. David Shiffman, Ph.D. Student in Ecosystem Science and Policy, University of Miami
71. Cheryl Black, Professor of Environmental Science, Edison State College, Fort Myers, FL, USA
72. Madeline I. Oetinger, Managing Director, Argus-Mariner Consulting Scientists
73. Dr. Robert E. Hueter, Director, Center for Shark Research, Mote Marine Laboratory, Sarasota, FL USA
74. Heather Marshall, MSc, PhD Candidate, University of Massachusetts Dartmouth, MA
75. Dr. Kevin Feldheim, Field Museum of Natural History, Chicago, IL USA
76. Alessandro De Maddalena, Dott., Mediterranean Shark Research Group, Milan, Italy
77. Jeremy Stafford-Deitsch, Co-Founder Shark Trust, UK
78. Dr. Lenore Litherland, Brisbane, Fisheries Queensland, DEEDI, QLD Government
79. Mark Bradfield, Zoology Student, University of Reading, UK
80. Dr. Kara E. Yopak, Perth, University of Western Australia
81. Jason Caruso, Presentations Supervisor, Melbourne Aquarium, Australia
82. Warrick Lyon, Fisheries Technician, National Institute of Water and Atmospheric Research, New Zealand
83. Paul McManus, BEng/com, Perth, Western Australia
84. Dr. Ramon Bonfil, The Bronx High School of Science, NY USA
85. Jonathan Harris, East Carolina University, USA
86. Jean Caire Pineda, Mandaluyong City, Philippines, Geologist for Atlas Exploration Inc.
87. Dr. K. Alexandra Curtis, Adjunct Professor, Department of Biology, Acadia University, Canada

88. Rachel Scharer, Masters Student, University of West Florida
89. Owen O'Shea, PhD Student, Murdoch University, WA
90. Sean Hettich, Entrepreneur, Perth, WA
91. Laura Ellam, Secondary Teacher, Perth, Western Australia
92. Stacy Blane, Perth, Murdoch University
93. Gisela Blane, Perth, In Touch Fitness & Massage
94. Robert Blane, Perth, Blane Electrical and Contracting Services
95. Àlex Bartolí, Marine Biologist, Barcelona
96. Fiona Milne, Dive Instructor Sea Dragon Dive Center, Khao Lak, Thailand
97. Marco Vindas, PhD student, Norwegian University of Life Sciences
98. Kate Pozezniak, Graduate Student in Environmental Studies, Florida Gulf Coast University, Marine Educator and Ocean Advocate, Sanibel Sea School, FL
99. Dr. Nicolas Straube, Postdoctoral Research Fellow, College of Charleston
100. Grice Marine Laboratory, SC
101. Meagan Swain, Principal, MMS Realty, Johannesburg, South Africa
102. John Willson, Richmond Hill, ON, Canada
103. Juliette Dorfman, Johannesburg, South Africa
104. Glenda Shomaly, Friends of Point Addis, Torquay Vic
105. Timothy Goddard, PADI Instructor at Waterworld Diving Centre, Ireland
106. Dr Allie Ford, Monash University, Melbourne, Australia
107. Mina Roberts, Deakin, ACT
108. Stephanie Win, London, Head of Product Delivery at DHM
109. Chloe Eston, Warwick Medical School, Warwick, UK
110. Alex Gaut, Adelaide, Biodiversity Program Manager, Conservation Council of South Australia
111. Alec Moore, PhD student, University of Bangor, UK
112. Flora Psarianos, Cranbourne, Victoria, Australia

113. Elizabeth L. Grushcow, student at Cleveland State University, Cleveland, Ohio, USA
114. James Stuebing, University of Guelph, Waterloo, Ontario, Canada
115. Lyle Squire Jnr. (BBlEnv), Director, Cairns Marine
116. Laura Simmons (BSc), Curator, Cairns Marine
117. Julian Baggio (BSc), Marine Parasitologist, Cairns Marine
118. Shaun P. Collin. WA Premiers Fellow and Winthrop Professor, The University of Western Australia, Australia

(1) Australian Shark Attack File. Accessed on October 19, 2011.

<http://www.taronga.org.au/animals-conservation/conservation-science/australian-shark-attack-file/australian-shark-attack-file>

(2) WA Dept. of Local Government and Regional Development. 2001. Shark Hazard Report. 184pp. accessed online on Sept. 13, 2004.

http://www.dlgrd.wa.gov.au/pub/docs/Shark/hazard_report.htm

(3) Dulvy NK, Freckleton RP, Polunin NVC. 2004. Coral reef cascades and the indirect effects of predator removal by exploitation. Ecology Letters 7:410-416.